



DePaul Magazine

Volume 1
Issue 12014 *Winter 2014*

Article 6

1-1-2014

Mixing It Up With Peter Mokran, Sound Engineer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/depaul-magazine>



Part of the [Audio Arts and Acoustics Commons](#), [Music Commons](#), and the [Other Engineering Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2014) "Mixing It Up With Peter Mokran, Sound Engineer," *DePaul Magazine*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 12014 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/depaul-magazine/vol1/iss12014/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Alumni Publications at Via Sapiientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in DePaul Magazine by an authorized editor of Via Sapiientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.



Mixing It Up With Peter Mokran, Sound Engineer

The making of a hit record encompasses many things, from great compositions and lyrics to the distinctive vocalizations and riffs of master musicians. But without a sound mixer who artfully manipulates these elements into compelling balance, the record may fail to find its audience. Peter Mokran (MUS '90) is one of the music industry's most sought-after sound mixers, engineers and producers because he understands what it takes to make a great record. "If you're not careful, you can lose the human element by having too much control over perfecting everything," Mokran explains. "You can definitely suck the soul out of the music."

With a career spanning more than 20 years, and with two 2010 Latin Grammys under his belt (for Camila's album "Dejarte de Amar" and their Record of the Year "Mientes"), Mokran understands the balance better than most. "Having a music background helps immensely, but it takes years and years to get to that comfort zone where you feel like you can tackle

"The first day I walked into the School of Music, I heard the amazing level of musicianship from the students, and I thought, 'This is definitely the place for me.'"

anything that comes up," he says. Mokran has worked with some of the most recognized artists in hip hop, rhythm and blues, pop and rock—Aaliyah, Lisa Stansfield, The Flaming Lips, Mary J. Blige, Christina Aguilera, R. Kelly, and Michael Jackson, to name a few—but he also enjoys putting his expertise to work for lesser-known artists such as Matt Goss, Chris Mann and Angélique Kidjo.

In any given song, Mokran could be called on to mix more than 100 individually recorded sounds into a single track. He admits it can sometimes be difficult to manage his personal

expectations with those of the artists and the record companies. "Early on, I didn't understand why people wouldn't want my complex masterpieces of bombastic sound," he laughs. Regardless of the textures he chooses to bring to a recording, he says that "in some ways, nothing has really changed since The Beatles. It's essentially done the same exact way. It's just easier now in the sense that you can have one person do everything on a laptop. Even that really hasn't changed the way music is put together."

Mokran barely envisioned the course his life would take when he came to DePaul. Initially recruited to play soccer, Mokran eventually left the team to pursue music full time. He never regretted his decision. "The first day I walked into the School of Music, I heard the amazing level of musicianship from the students, and I thought, 'This is definitely the place for me.'" From taking classes with leading professionals to participating in impromptu jam sessions with his peers, Mokran remembers, "There was always something going on."

As a guitarist with his own band making demos on a four-track recorder, he seemed headed for a career on stage rather than behind the scenes. "I didn't realize there was a career in mixing," he recalls. Thomas Miller (MUS MM '96), coordinator of the sound recording technology program, became Mokran's mentor at the School of Music when Miller was an instructor. "He was really inspirational to me," Mokran explains. "I had a million questions. I'm sure I drove him crazy, but to have someone of his caliber that I could ask questions of—that was invaluable to me." It was Miller who encouraged Mokran to pursue a bachelor's degree in sound recording technology.

Mokran relished the opportunity to hone his craft at local sound studios. "We were able to pick the brains of the incredible engineers who taught classes there." Even today, Mokran finds himself reflecting on his School of Music days with some of his peers. "I just worked on two projects with [drummer, former student and current DePaul faculty member] Gary Novak, and we reminisced about our time at the School of Music," he recalls fondly.

Despite his great success, Mokran still feels he has mountains to climb. "I feel like I'm just getting into my prime now," he says. "Hopefully, my greatest accomplishment is still to come."